



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## *Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

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### **DMME DIRECTOR O. GENE DISHNER TO RETIRE**

**Richmond, VA** – Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) Director O. Gene Dishner has announced that he will retire from state service effective December 1, 2005. In a distinguished public service career that has spanned nearly 38 years, the Scott County native is known for his skill in creating organizations and has been called upon to lead the reorganization of two state government agencies.

Governor Mark Warner recognized Dishner's problem-solving abilities and effective leadership. "Gene has been an innovative leader in public management and initiated the first ongoing strategic management planning in Virginia state government as director of the Housing and Community Development and Mines, Minerals and Energy agencies," said Governor Warner. "These efforts led to DMME winning three U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Awards, including the prestigious Medallion of Excellence and Award for Continuing Excellence."

Dishner served as Scott County's first administrator from 1968 to 1978. He was selected by the Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Public Administrators in 1975 as Outstanding Public Administrator. The award recognized his application of modern methods and technology to the needs of a rural county in areas such as refuse collection and disposal, accounting, purchasing, computer use, flood forecasting, and emergency services.

In 1978, Dishner was appointed as the first director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development where he successfully merged diverse programs into an effective agency. While there he directed the development of a major new local government funding program, the Community Development Block Grant Program.

When DMME was formed in 1985, Dishner was asked to consider heading the new agency, and was appointed that year. Through his leadership, the agency redirected and reorganized its regulatory divisions to provide better service and strengthen management controls. Virginia's mine safety and

reclamation programs have received national recognition, leading the nation in electronic permitting processes and the digital mapping of surface and underground coal mine workings.

According to information gathered and published by the *Richmond Times Dispatch* on June 22, 2002, “Gene Dishner...is the longest-serving gubernatorial appointee, period....and [typifies] the commendable civil servant who – in this hour of calculated political appointments – has demonstrated a party-transcending commitment to serving the Commonwealth.”

Commerce and Trade Secretary Michael J. Schewel agrees with this assessment in Dishner’s long tenure at DMME. “Gene is the rare self-effacing leader who has the confidence to hire great people, sell them on his vision and his strategic management style, and then get out of their way as they execute that strategy,” said Secretary Schewel.